

# 16 PRACTICAL TIPS FOR Meditation Beginners

## 16 Practical Tips for Meditation Beginners

Meditation, particularly mindfulness meditation, has become extremely popular over the last few years. ***While meditation can be very simple, there are several common mistakes and misconceptions about meditation that you'll want to avoid if you're new to the practice.***

Getting started on the right foot increases the odds of maintaining your meditation practice and getting the most benefits from it.

**Use these tips to avoid meditation pitfalls:**

- 1. Sit up straight.** Slouching may be comfortable for a couple of minutes, but it takes more strength than you think to support poor posture. Sit up straight and let your skeleton support your weight.
- 2. Start slowly. *Just a couple of minutes is enough to start.*** There are two good reasons for this. It's easier to be compliant when you only have to sit for three minutes at a time. It's also challenging to meditate for an extended period of time if you're not experienced.
- 3. Meditate multiple times each day.** By sitting for just a couple of minutes, you should have time to sit for multiple sessions. You might want to try meditating for a few minutes each hour.
- 4. It's all about the breath. *Your breath connects you to the moment and helps to keep your mind focused.*** The breath isn't something to be focused on intensely, rather it acts as an anchor to maintain awareness of the present.

5. **Count if necessary.** If you're struggling to maintain awareness of your breath, count your breaths. Count each inhalation until you've reached five and then start over.
6. **Keep your eyes opened slightly.** It's easier for your mind to wander from the present if your eyes are closed. Keep your gaze lowered and soft.
7. **Acknowledge thoughts but avoid dwelling on them.** All thoughts should be treated the same. They're just phenomena passing through. Let them go and return your attention to the breath.
8. **Be patient.** It seems like it should be easy to concentrate for a few minutes, but the mind likes to stay busy. It's a challenging habit to break. Be patient.
9. **Sit comfortably.** It's not necessary to sit with your legs folded up like a pretzel. *Any position that can be held comfortably for the planned time is good enough.*
10. **Use a timer.** Without a timer, you'll find yourself worrying about the time and continue to peek at the clock. Set a reliable timer and you won't be as preoccupied with the time.
11. **Increase your meditation time by 5 minutes each week.** Avoid the temptation to progress too quickly. Ideally, you'll look forward to your meditation sessions. Progressing too quickly causes restlessness and agitation.
12. **Consider getting expert assistance.** There are many free opportunities to meditate with others. Look for local meetups or contact your local Buddhist temple. With so many people meditating, you're bound to find an expert willing to help.

13. **Take every opportunity to meditate.** Meditating at home under perfect conditions is great practice, but *the ultimate goal is to have the ability to meditate anywhere*. A skilled meditator can meditate on a 99-degree packed, loud, smelly, subway.
  
14. **Be persistent.** If you're meditating each day with the full intention of improving, you'll eventually become a skilled meditator.
  
15. **Stretch first.** Your meditation position should be comfortable and easy. If your position feels like a stretch, you won't be comfortable. Stretch first.
  
16. **There's no reason to be concerned about your hands.** Just place your hands comfortably on your lap. Allowing your hands to be lower can eventually pull down on the shoulders and become uncomfortable.

Meditation can bring you both mental and physical benefits. Use these tips when beginning to meditate and you'll quickly become skillful at a practice you can enjoy for the rest of your life.